



BITS OF GOLD

Montana Talking Book Library



Volume 100, Number 2

Spring 2000

HAPPY BIRTHDAY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

On April 24th the Library of Congress celebrated its 200th birthday. President John Adams signed the law that established the Library of Congress, now our oldest federal cultural institution in the United States. Its primary purpose is to serve as a research library for the U.S. Congress. At its beginning their collection held less than one thousand books. There are now over 115 million items available in various formats. The National Library Service that provides the equipment and books for all the patrons of Talking Book Libraries is a part of this Library. The Library of Congress also serves other libraries today and can be reached through the Internet on your computer at www.loc.gov. The theme for this bicentennial celebration is "Libraries, Creativity, Liberty".

BOOKS (LIBRARIES)—The treasured wealth of the world, the fit inheritance of generations and nations
--Henry David Thoreau

CREATIVITY can solve almost any problem. The creative act, the defeat of habit by originality, overcomes everything. --Bits & Pieces, March, 2000

LIBERTY—I am a lover of liberty and so I would do nothing to restrict yours.
--Mohandas K. Gandhi

Some books about liberty, creativity and libraries you may want to read:

- RC 34655 The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms
- RC 38706 The Creative Spirit
- RC 41149 Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity
- RC 16770 Six Great Ideas
- RC 47732 The Story of American Freedom
- RC 24388 Books that Made the Difference
- RC 42231 A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes,
and the Eternal Passion for Books
- RC 48514 The Library of Congress

LIBRARIAN'S LOG**Computers! Blessing or Curse?**

The last time I called my bank, I cringed upon being told, "The computers are down". I have mixed feelings when I hear that statement. The bank employees are hard workers trying to do their best to help me—their customer. It is still frustrating not being able to get the service you want. OUR computers went down on April 21st through April 25th—testing our nerves and your patience! Our computer is running again, thanks to the dedication and teamwork of library, Keystone system staff and several key state technical staff. We agonized over this break in service and thank you for your patience.

Overdue Reminder Notices:

Our computer system's overdue function is now operational. It will generate an overdue reminder notice for every book that has been checked out past our 60-day loan period. Many of you have already received some of these notices. We realize that some patrons have not had these books for a long time, if at all. Thank you for returning the books or telling us you do not have them. Your response is helping us reconcile our inventory and get these books off of your files! So a big **"THANK YOU"** for assisting us in cleaning up our database files.

WebOpac Pilot Project

We have reached our hoped-for goal of having twenty patrons sign up for our pilot project. Thank you for your interest! There are several steps we still need to accomplish before we are up and running. A generic email address will be established for our WebOpac patrons. Parameters for ease of use are being designed with assistance from Judith Dixon of the National Library Service. The WebOpac link will be connected to our website. Our staff will test the system for two weeks to work out the kinks. We will then email the WebOpac patrons with operating instructions and email address for troubleshooting. Stay tuned to your email messages for more information soon!

LIBRARY HOURS: Mon-Fri 8am-5pm**PHONE HOURS:** Mon-Fri 9am-5pm**PHONE NUMBERS:** 1-800-332-3400 or 406-444-2064**WEB SITE:** <http://msl.state.mt.us/tbl>**REGIONAL LIBRARIAN:** Christie Briggs, cbriggs@state.mt.us**VOLUNTEER COORD:** Susan Merrin, smerrin@state.mt.us**CIRCULATION CLERK:** Carolyn Meier, cameier@state.mt.us**READER ADVISORS:** Cheryl Christopher, cchristopher@state.mt.usRoberta Gebhardt, rgebhardt@state.mt.usLee Madison, lmadison@state.mt.us**BITS OF GOLD EDITOR:** Cheryl Christopher

LIBRARIAN'S LOG**Patron Spotlight**

We feel that all patrons are special. Recently two patrons came to our attention that have helped others find services and resources. I'd like to share some of the works done by Mabel Badgett of Laurel and Terry Dwyer of Great Falls.

Mabel Badgett

Mabel leads a support group in Laurel once a month. She has authored three books, two of which were written, because of her desire to bring humor and hope to others in similar circumstances. We have recently recorded her first book, MCB 550, FUN WITH STORIES AND PICTURES OF THE REAL WEST. It contains some favorite short stories of Mabel's. She is currently writing a book of crafts, specifically written for people with low vision or blindness. Mabel will be teaching her crafts at the MAB's Summer Orientation Program this June. Our library will be displaying some of Mabel's crafts during May and June. Crafts made from ordinary things will surprise you! Mabel contends that she has always made the best of her surroundings and resources and urges others to do the same. Her background includes professional photography which lead her to invent a photo enlarger using a large soup can (Campbell's, of course!). Her photographs include Montana landscapes, wildlife, pets, portraits, as well as photos of historic sites such as Pompeys Pillar. She is an inspiration to others. Thank you, Mabel!

Terry Dwyer

Terry is a retired editor of the Great Falls Tribune and is a fine writer in his own right. He has given permission to reprint his latest article relating his experience with macular degeneration, published in the Washington Post on April 18, 2000. This article has inspired people nationwide and been the cause of many calls to my office from Montanans discovering our service for the first time! Thank you, Terry!

Christie Briggs, Regional Librarian

TOO OLD TO LEARN? NOT ME, DOC. YOU?**By Terry Dwyer**

During the winter of 1998-1999, I became legally blind. It was not without warning. However, within two months, the door on normal vision was virtually slammed shut. In November, I had been driving a car and reading, but by December I realized I could no longer drive without serious difficulty and reading newspaper type became impossible.

TOO OLD TO LEARN? NOT ME, DOC. YOU?

The cause was macular degeneration, a progressive condition that affects the retina and causes gradual loss of vision. When I saw my longtime ophthalmologist in December, he shrugged his shoulders after explaining the situation and advised me that there was nothing that could be done to help me. He suggested that I might buy a lighted magnifying glass to help me with reading. It was a terrible blow. I had already found them totally inadequate.

Much later I would learn that there are many forms of assistance for the blind. And I would later learn from other visually impaired individuals that many eye professionals exhibit little knowledge of the help that is available outside their offices.

I went through a period of agony before I sought a second opinion. Although this specialist confirmed my diagnosis and what my original doctor said about lack of treatment options, he did recommend that services provided by my home state of Montana would be helpful. Other states have similar services and in many areas private organizations offer such aid. It was through this assistance that I regained my hope. With the help of trained professionals in the state programs and their associates in some privately run programs, I learned about a variety of options that have made my life fuller.

I am now a faithful subscriber to the talking books service, in which tapes of books are loaned free to people with vision problems. And I get recorded versions of several major magazines.

State officials also helped me test a variety of expensive gadgets. One of them, a talking computer, reads each letter as I type it and then can read the completed text back to me by sentence, word or paragraph. It has allowed me to continue writing.

On a subsequent visit to my original ophthalmologist, I suggested that people in his profession should inform themselves about things available to help the visually impaired. Somewhat agitated, he asked me for specifics. I told him about all the gadgets I had learned about and the services I was receiving. Then I told him about the talking computer that I was using. He responded that he was surprised anyone my age would want to learn to use a computer. I am 77. However, I have a background of standard computer use for 23 years, including newspaper work before I retired. And I told him I was undeterred in learning to use this new tool and to get my life back on track.

TOO OLD TO LEARN? NOT ME, DOC. YOU?

Despite the difficulties of dealing with this disease and even my doctor's disregard, I have never been depressed. I have long held the position that we must play the hand that is dealt to us. But it is easier and more fulfilling to tackle life with macular degeneration with the appropriate tools. I hope all doctors keep that in mind for their patients, no matter how old they are.

Resources

Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind, 202-462-2900, 1421 P Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 or www.clb.org. Offers services including assistive technology training and career services programs.

National Federation of the Blind, 410-659-9314, 1800 Johnson Street, Baltimore, MD 21230 or www.nfb.org. Promotes independence of blind individuals by providing services including training centers and merchandise geared to help the blind. Has affiliate organizations in all 50 states and the District.

Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington, 202-234-1010, 1775 Church Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Services include a monthly macular degeneration support group.

Terry Dwyer is the retired managing editor of the Great Falls, MT, Tribune.

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EVENTS CALENDAR

APRIL: 9-15—National Library Week
17-21—Reading Is Fun Week
16-22—National Volunteer Week
23—Earth Day
24—Library of Congress 200th Birthday

MAY: 1—May Day & Mother Goose Day
5—Cinco de Mayo
1-5—Read to Me Week
9—National Teacher Day
29—Memorial Day

JUNE: 12—Summer Reading Program begins

JULY: 4—Independence Day
16-22—Space Week

RADIO PLAYS

Do you remember the days before television? A lot of families would sit around the radio and listen to shows like “The Shadow Knows”, “The Green Hornet”, “Abbott and Costello”. The LA Theatre Works/BBC Productions and Blue Ridge Radio Players have produced a number of plays on cassette that we offer in our “OS” collection. These include works by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, George Bernard Shaw, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton and others. The subjects range from humorous to the macabre, inspirational to the fantastic. Enjoy a bit of nostalgia; request a radio play.

MAGAZINES

Why haven't I received this month's magazine? Have you asked yourself this question AND receive any of the following magazines: Arizona Highway, Choice, Diabetes Forecast, Good Old Days, Idaho Yesterday, Modern Maturity, Montana Outdoors, and WOW magazine? Our computer is programmed to send you the next issue after you return the one you are currently reading. So please enjoy the issue you currently have for as long as you like. When you return it, the computer will then send the next issue to you.

Also, if you receive on tape the Bits of Gold Newsletter and the Montana Magazine of Western History please return them to us in their envelope. Due to many changes in the Country Music industry Music City News will no longer be published as of the February 2000 issue. It will be replaced by Country Music magazine. The first issue of Country Music will be sent to subscribers this summer. If you would like to see what other magazines are available, please contact us for a catalog.

DID YOU NOTICE?

The mailing cards on the book containers have been changed. Instead of a slash in the upper corner, there is a hole punched in that same corner. If the hole is in the upper, left-hand corner of the card, your address will be facing you. In order to have our address facing you when you return your books, be sure the hole is in the upper, right-hand corner of the mail card.

HATS OFF TO GREEN THUMB!

Green Thumb has provided us with a volunteer receptionist, Carolyn McCain. Carolyn has assisted our staff, for over a year, in answering patron calls, entering patron requests, and various other “as needed” projects. We appreciate her southern hospitality and dedication. She originally hails from Baltimore, Maryland and has lived in West Virginia, Virginia, Alabama and Louisiana before venturing west to Montana. Please welcome Carolyn the next time she answers your call.

A GOOD BOOK YOU SAY...

Have you ever been asked, “Read any good books lately”? What would you say? How would you define a good book? Some have said the HOLY BIBLE is “THE GOOD BOOK”. Others have said it is one you can’t put down from start to finish. It may also be called a “good” book because you read it at the exact time you needed to hear what it had to say. And there are those who have said that a good book is one that makes you learn, think, forget, remember, believe or hope.

There are as many kinds of books as there are reasons for reading them. Here are a few examples: for information, to relax, for adventure, to expand your mind, for fun, to imagine or to travel from the comfort of your armchair. Why do you read? Could it be for all or none of these reasons?

Subjects, characters, settings, genres, etc are all ways to categorize books. Some books have also been described as bor-r-ring, comforting, fascinating, inspiring and spellbinding. Everybody has opinions. Just like with movies and restaurants, books have critics, too. There are bestseller lists, teachers, authors, publishers, librarians and friends. We at the Talking Book Library think the most important critic is you!

There is help for you to choose books. The National Library Service’ “Talking Book Topics” catalog lists and describes the newest titles in our collection. You can check with your public library about local book clubs. Our KLAS computer database lists over 48,000 titles in fifty-one categories. There is Internet access at <http://msl.state.mt.us/tbl>, link to “Collection” then scroll to “Web-Blnd”. So think about why you read and what exactly it is that you like about a book. The more details you can tell us about how you define a “good” book, the better we’ll be able to serve you. And the sooner you’ll be able to enjoy that “good” book.

PATRON PICKS

RC 45883	BLOOD WORK by Michael Connelly
OS 14	LITTLE BRITCHES by Ralph Moody
RC 48261	SOMEPLACE TO BE FLYING by Charles de Lint
RC 47490	GREATEST GENERATION by Tom Brokaw
RC 36037	EARL MINDELL’S HERB BIBLE by Earl Mindell
RC 47572	HERBAL DEFENSE by Robyn Landis

**Even if it’s a little thing, do something for those who have a need of help,
something for which you get no pay for the privilege of doing it.**

--Albert Schweitzer

RECENTLY RECORDED MONTANA CASSETTE BOOKS

- MCB 515** THE WHITE CALF by Cliff Faulknor; narrated by Dorothy Harper. Eagle child, a young Piegan Indian boy, lived on the Montana plains in the 1800's. He found an orphaned white buffalo calf and brought it back to his tribe to raise. They have many adventures before he was able to return the calf to a bison herd.
- MCB 516** DEAD END TRAIL by Norman A Fox; narrated by Jeff Sanderson. A western set in late 1800's, outlaw Rowdy Dow attempts to pay back a debt by fulfilling the dying wish of his old friend, desperado Butch. Butch wants his ill-gotten booty to be restored to the ranchers who desperately need it. The good deed may get Rowdy killed.
- MCB 518** FROM THE QUARRIES OF LAST CHANGE GULCH by William Campbell; narrated by Kris Hans. This section covers the history of the Masonic Order in Helena, Montana, from 1864 to 1889. Written from Helena newspaper files, it emphasizes the impact of freemasons Cornelius Hedges, Nathaniel P. Langford and Wilber Fisk Sanders on local history.
- MCB 519** YELLOWSTONE RED by Tom Ray; narrated by Steve Samples. This is the spiritual biography of a man, Billy, whose father was hanged as a road agent by the Montana vigilantes. Billy loses everything he ever loved and everyone who loved him, but he finds peace and forgiveness through servanthood.
- MCB 520** BEAR AWARE by Bill Schneider; narrated by Jean Smith. If you plan on hiking and camping in bear country, here is a collection of safety tips.

LIBRARY STAFF ATTEND AND HOST CONFERENCES

Carolyn Meier attended a workshop in Raleigh, NC to stay updated on our Keystone database upgrades.

Christie Briggs attended the National Library Service conference in Los Angeles, CA to learn what's new at the National Library Service and prepare for the upcoming machine audit by the inspector general. Outreach programs and ideas on how we can improve our services were highlights.

Susie Merrin held a Recording Program workshop for Montana narrators, monitors and reviewers. Laura Giannarelli, a National Library Service narrator and monitor was an outstanding speaker and trainer. The workshop has received rave reviews!

SOME QUESTIONS PATRONS FREQUENTLY ASK

We get many phone calls each day. Portions of the calls are about our service and equipment. The following are the answers to some frequently asked questions:

How long may I keep the equipment and books?

The equipment and books are loaned to you from the National Library Service through our Library. You keep the equipment until you no longer need or want our service. At that time, return the equipment to our Library. The books have a sixty-day loan period.

Do I have to pay for this service?

No, our library is a free service to those who qualify. There are no postage fees either. If you need to correspond with us and do not have a mailing card, just address it to

Montana Talking Book Library
1515 E Sixth Avenue
PO Box 201800
Helena, MT 59620-1800

and write "Free Matter for the Blind" where you would normally put a postage stamp. Of course, be sure to include your name, address and phone number with any correspondence you send to us.

Is this book defective? The tape says it has a side 3 but I can't find it. It may not necessarily be defective. Before you return the book, check to see if A) you are on the correct side of the tape B) your side-selector switch is on the correct side and C) check the RC number of your book. If it is a lower number, you may have one of the books that had been recorded on two-track tape in earlier years instead of four-track tape. The instructions given at the end of each side are written for four-track tapes not two-track tapes. So they may not match if the tape is a two-track tape. Each tape has a raised number stamped on it. If your book has more than one tape, the second tape will have a 3 stamped on it if it is a two-track tape; it will have a 5 stamped on it if it is a four-track tape.

This tape is defective (broken, garbled, twisted, etc), what do I do? Do not try to rewind the tape if there is something wrong, this will help us find the problem and correct it if possible. Just put a rubber band or string around the defective tape and place it upside down in its container. Mark the defective box in the upper, left-hand corner of the mailing card on the side that shows our address and return the book to us. Call us if you want us to send you another copy of the defective book. Of course, if there are no defects and you have finished the book, please rewind all the tapes.

How do I clean my machine?

Thank you for this question. We know most of you take good care of your machines. This is appreciated because each cassette machine costs \$250 to replace. Here are a few tips. The best way to care for and keep your equipment clean is prevention. Keep your machine away from heat. Operate it on a flat surface to prevent it being dropped and broken. Always operate your machine with clean hands. Also, do not put food, drink or cigarettes on or near your books and equipment. A general dusting and an occasional wipe using a cloth with "409" or similar cleaner sprayed on it should keep the outer surface clean. Dust will build up around the tape heads after a time. We also have available for check out a cassette head cleaner tape. Just ask for HDC 00001. If you feel your machine needs more than just a general cleaning, please return it to our library and call to request a replacement.

I have an empty green book container. Should I send it back?

Yes! To replace a whole book, including the container, costs between \$5.00 and \$8.00 each. Lately a lot of tapes have been returned in other book containers. To avoid finding an empty container, read one book at a time and be sure ALL the tapes are put back in the correct container.

I've lost my mailing card for my book (or equipment). What do I do?

Put your name, address, and phone number on one side of a blank card or paper. On the other side write our address and attach it to the book container or equipment box. This keeps our records accurate, thank you.

Why am I not getting any books that I've requested?

There are several reasons why. One is that if you are a "turn around" patron and have reached the maximum number of books that you've requested, you will not receive anymore books until you start returning the ones you have. If you are a "request only" patron, you will not receive any books at all unless you give us the RC or MCB numbers for titles you want on your request list. Also, if you have only given us a few numbers for your list, they may be checked out and not available to send to you (these numbers will remain on your list until they become available and are then sent to you). Those patrons who only have one or two preferences may find that they eventually will have read all the titles in the collection coded with those preferences. If you have any questions, please call us. We can change your service type, your preferences, the number of books and how often you receive them.

Oops! I found an extra tape and I have already sent the book back. What should I do?

This will happen occasionally. Just place a rubber band or string around the extra tape and put it in another book's container that you are returning. Again, to avoid this, try to read only one book at a time and check to make sure you've placed all the correct tapes back in their container.

MEDICARE PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE IN BRAILLE

The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) has printed in Braille these publications: "Does Your Doctor or Provider Accept Assignment?", "Medicare Benefits for Hospice", "Medicare Home Health Care", "Medigap Policies", "Medicare Savings for Qualified Beneficiaries" and "Choosing a Nursing Home". To order an individual copy call 1-800-633-4227 or on the computer at: www.medicare.gov.

CAMPBELL'S SOUP LABELS

We have been saving labels from Campbell's Soup to obtain equipment for patron use. Right now we have just over 6000 labels. Thanks to everyone who is contributing labels for our project.

CASSETTE BOOKS 1999

The National Library Service will start mailing the large-print edition of "Cassette Books 1999" after mid-April. It will be mailed directly to those patrons who ordered this catalog on their annual order forms. The "Talking Book Topics" catalog will announce when the cassette copy of Cassette Books 1999 is available.

SUMMER READING PROGRAM FOR YOUTH

Summer is fast approaching. Reading is a great answer to the question, "What should I do today"? This year's summer reading program theme will be "2000—Launch into the New Millennium". The program will start on June 12th. We will have each person sign contracts and extra bonus points can be earned. Your invitation and contract will be coming soon in the mail. Join in the fun!

MONTANA LIBRARIAN'S PICKS FOR SUMMER READING

- RC 32945** BUSTER MIDNIGHT'S CAFÉ by Sandra Dallas (also MCB 225)
- RC 48774** DEVIL'S TEARDROP by Jeffery Deaver
- RC 45815** SNOW IN AUGUST by Pete Hamill
- RC 46127** WIDOW FOR ONE YEAR by John Irving
- RC 46300** FALSE PROPHET by Faye Kellerman
- RC 46882** POISONWOOD BIBLE by Barbara Kingsolver
- RC 47380** WHERE THE HEART IS by Billie Letts
- RC 40054** LADDER OF YEARS by Anne Tyler

**Montana Talking Book Library
1515 East Sixth Avenue
PO Box 201800
Helena, MT 59620-1800**

**Free Matter
for the Blind**

Address Service Requested

This newsletter is available on cassette, e-mail and large print upon request or visit us at our website: <http://msl.state.mt.us/tbl>

THE TALKING BOOK LIBRARY WILL BE CLOSED

Memorial Day--Monday, May 29 and Fourth of July--Tuesday, July 4

SPECIAL THANKS TO MAB CHAPTER

Special thanks to the Missoula Chapter of the Montana Association for the Blind for donating 2 copies of AN ORNERY BUNCH to be recorded for the Montana Talking Books Collection.

SCHOOL GUIDELINES

Letters are going out to Montana schools who are signed up for our service, reminding them to return their equipment to us before school lets out. Along with this reminder, we will be sending the newly revised School Guidelines in keeping with the National Library Service requirements. These will be implemented next fall.

NEWSFLASH!!! MAB SUMMER ORIENTATION

Applications are still open for Montana Association for the Blind Summer Orientation Program. Call Kay Kjellstrom 1-406-453-0452 collect or email kayk@montana.com